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LIBRARY SCIENCE  
STUDY HALL

# THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

FORMERLY "THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT"

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE A.A.L.

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# THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Official Journal of the Association of Assistant Librarians

(Section of the Library Association)

Edited by A. C. Jones, Hornsey Public Libraries.

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FEBRUARY, 1954

## REVALUATIONS V

By Thomas Clearwater

WE REVERT now to a matter touched upon in earlier Revaluations. Fortified by the views of Messrs. Elliott (*L.A.R.*, June 1953) and You-know-whom (*Library Review*, Winter 1952) we seek to examine yet further aspects of those outpourings of librarians, those quaint admixtures of fact and fancifulness, tubas and taradiddles, which are dignified by the name Annual Reports, and which befuddled committees so often so rashly permit their chief officers to send at public expense to selected citizens and (very carefully selected) colleagues. We shun the well-ploughed furrows, typography and statistics, and concentrate on the waffle, the introductory remarks, the paragraphs usually headed "General."

Why do they do it? (Committeemen first, please). Do they really believe that all this talk of Kinsey and Keyes and the influence of television is vital stuff, to be promulgated at all costs as part of their service to civilization? Or are these worthy grocers and postmen and simple schoolteachers persuaded against their better judgment by the blandishments of revered chief officers? (In the country of the blind, the one-eyed man was king). Or do they regard the fulsome flights of the annual report as the librarian's consolation for twelve months of underpaid drudgery—an invisible emolument like the privilege of working among books about which we used to hear so much?

As for the chief librarians, bless them, we know only too well that they have their little foibles. They, and even we, are not all as articulate as they, and even we, might be. Not all will achieve immortality in the B.N.B. or the B.M. catalogue, and some must make do with the second-hand glory of "—— Public Library: *Chief Librarian's report*", heroes to their wives and real live authors to their children. So there they give vent to their frustrated ambitions to be literary men as well as handmaidens of literature. And what haste they make! What rosebuds they gather! Not a topical topic in the vast fields of literature and librarianship, bibliography and sociology, but calls forth its pronunciamento from the Librarian of Little Hogwash, whose views are dutifully hearkened to by the citizenry—not at first hand, of course, but through their much-distorted report in the *Little Hogwash Gazette and Advertiser*. Are long-playing needles on everybody's lips? Does television catch the eye? Has a magistrate rashly generalized about illiteracy and delinquency? Then be sure that your chief librarian will be on to it, reporting for all he's worth, for what he's worth, his views as he understands them and the effect upon his flock.

All this, of course, is but the froth, the matter<sup>1</sup>, the librarian's licence, the embellishment of the Annual Report. The real achievement, the matter<sup>2</sup>, the dusty detail follows after. Here are celebrated or excused

1 O.E.D., definition 1.4.

2 E.O.D., definition III.

the issue trends and the stock figures, the staff are complimented or condescended to (never criticized), the outstanding achievements of the reference library are recorded (specific failures never). The overall effect is slightly spurious, somewhat idealized—yes, rather dishonest. Mr. K. C. Harrison is not the first librarian to realize that “it would be misleading to assert that all queries put to the Reference Library staff are answered,” but he is probably the first to say so in as many words.

Miss Thompson of Wallsend approaches the heart of the matter when she says that “in writing an Annual Report we find it difficult to avoid a certain sameness year by year . . .” If nothing unusual has happened, then *ipso facto* there is nothing unusual to report. It is the remorseless round of the library year which brings about the monotony of the average Annual Report, together with the timidity of the average librarian who insists on reducing such stuff as he has to the level of platitudinous claptrap. (Mr. Gardner may grumble gently about dogs, litter and “ill-supervised small children,” but criticism of readers is generally taboo). We cannot all be John O’Learys, to cut through these difficulties with wit, personality and common-sense (“There is nothing outstanding to report . . . but . . .”). The less well endowed must have weighty matters to report if their words are to glow, and the exceptional happens only in an exceptional year to an exceptional library. For the rest, therefore, it is pertinent to ask, “Why bother to compile this mediocre stuff, year after year? Who is supposed to read it? The committee? The public? The local press? Your fellow librarians?” The librarian at least has all these possibilities before him. But what of the committee, who presumably authorize publication? Do they, all twenty or so of them, need an elaborately(!) printed pamphlet for their personal pleasure? (And no money to increase the book-fund this year? Oh, tut!). Do they consider that the small edition they authorize would be adequate, if properly publicized, to meet the demand from interested readers? Or are they concerned only that their librarian shall be able to hold up his head among his fellows?

Reports are written, ostensibly, by librarians to committees, or by committees to councils. Many of them, as Mr. Elliott has pointed out, are intended in fact to be read by the general public. Very few are straightforwardly addressed to the library user or potential user, though Warrington concedes “*You* wanted to know . . .” and “*You* were most determined to read . . .” pages in a report addressed “Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen.” But the confusion caused in the minds of writers by doubt as to the real addressee usually results in much more significant weaknesses in presentation. It is clearly wasteful to produce for general distribution information required by committee and council, and any intelligent citizen must be resentful at the expenditure of his money for the purpose of making such a song and dance about the seemingly simple matter of running a library. Who cares that Miss Snooks passed Group A of something called the Registration Examination, or that Mr. Postlethwaite returned to duty from library school without examination successes, but having nevertheless “gained very useful experience”? An Annual Report designed to interest this reader would not contain the information required by the council for its records nor the Library Association for its statistical summary. And why should it? It would contain a few facts, carefully chosen and arranged; it would contain one or two photographs. It would be attractively printed on a single folded sheet, and it would be available in the library for any reader who wished to have it. It would contain no airy waffling about juvenile delinquency or the effect of television on reading (“It is not yet possible to measure

whether it has had any . . ."). Nor would the official report submitted to the committee or council, until the matter became one of urgent local significance. The place for such effusions is in the chief librarian's letters to his grandmother—or to the more accommodating daily papers if he *must* see them in print.

## FLUORESCENT LIGHTING

J. R. PIKE, Deputy Borough Librarian, Torquay.

FLUORESCENT lighting, says one writer, has largely superseded pendant lights and, after high installation costs, is economical in use . . . Experience has indicated this to be so, hence this short account, which will attempt to 'shed some light' on this rather technical subject.

Although not wishing to delve into the intricacies of Ohm's Law, some knowledge of the terms encountered is necessary. Volts and amperes are no real concern on this occasion, though we must remember that voltages are not standard throughout the country: they vary from 200 to 250 (110 in some places) and may be A.C. (alternating current) or D.C. (direct current). Fluorescents operate best on A.C. and for a given voltage (i.e. 200—210 or 240—250), a point to watch when replacements are fitted, though suppliers usually only stock the local voltages.

The amount of electrical power necessary to light lamps and heat fires is expressed in *watts* or kilowatts (1,000 watts). A *unit* of electricity is 1 *kilowatt-hour*: thus a 100 watt bulb will function for 10 hours on one unit, whereas the large 2,000 watt fire in the lounge at home will use two units an hour.

The amount of light at a given point is expressed in *foot-candles* or *lumens-per-square-foot*. This can be measured with a meter and libraries, says one authority, should aim at 8 lm/sq. ft at the shelves; 7 lm/sq. ft. for general room lighting and 15 lm/sq. ft. at desk level.

In the home the units used are paid for according to the number of rooms; large libraries pay for theirs on a "maximum-demand" tariff, the m-d being the heaviest load taken over a given period. In the interests of the annual expenditure under this heading, this must be kept as low as possible by "switching off all lights and fires when not in use."

Fluorescent lighting has a *high lumen output per watt*, in other words, it gives several times the light of its tungsten equivalent. Compare the difference in light from a 4 foot tube (rated at 40 watts) with the 40 watt bulb in your bedside lamp. Some indication of their effectiveness may be gauged from the fact that at Torquay, 41 tubes with a total rating of just over 4,000 watts were installed in the Central Lending Library in place of the existing installation which totalled 13,200 watts; the light was improved at book level by 200 per cent., though the demand was reduced by 10 kilowatts.

Many decorative fittings are now available, but their cost is high; the industrial "seagull" type, being tax-free, are the cheapest, but as there is a certain amount of glare with them, some form of screening is advisable. With single tube installations there is a disturbing tendency for moving objects to flicker (known as stroboscopic effect); this can be eradicated only by using twin tube fittings.

Running costs are reduced considerably, in effect; more light is obtained for the money; but an important factor to consider is the high cost and apparent frequency of replacement. The manufacturers say that the life of a "hot" cathode tube is two or three times that of a tungsten lamp, though some of the latter seem to function indefinitely. There is no mistaking a worn-out fluorescent, however, as soon as the

efficiency drops below an optimum point it will strike intermittently and must be replaced immediately.

By using different fluorescent powder coatings, colour variations in the light from them is obtained. Their suitability for libraries is largely a matter of opinion and experiment. I have found natural (giving an almost white light) the most suitable; "daylight" (a blue light) seems too hard and 'warm white' (pink) gives reduced definition, but the last two 'mixed' in a twin fitting give the nearest to real daylight. There is some tendency to eyestrain, particularly when all departments are not uniformly equipped, and this is no doubt emphasised by the lack of shadows.

Cold cathode lighting is a more recent development and has been used in some libraries. 'Cold' means that the electrodes or cathodes inside the tube operate at a much lower temperature—about one-sixth. Basically it is very similar, but is credited with these improvements:

It gives a longer life (5,000 to 10,000 hours) and running costs are less; starting is instantaneous—a transformer is used to obtain a high operating voltage, which means it will strike as soon as the switch is pressed. On the other hand, installation costs are very high and special precautions have to be taken with the wiring—a possible added expense in a conversion scheme.

The lighting at the new Manor Park branch at Sheffield is as good as it can be, yet it relies on ordinary bulbs in specially designed fittings; the alcoves there are "spot-lighted" by miniature searchlights. The resulting effect is pleasing to the eye, like everything else there, and very effective.

For economy and efficiency alone, fluorescent lighting deserves serious consideration for any scheme, large or small, which may be contemplated.

#### References.

Atkinson, A. D. S.	<i>Modern fluorescent lighting.</i> 1951.
do.	<i>Fluorescent lighting.</i> 3rd ed. 1948.
Miller, H. A.	<i>Cold cathode fluorescent lighting.</i> 1949.
do.	<i>Luminous tube lighting.</i> 1946.

## THE WITCH'S CURSE,<sup>12</sup> OR WHY LOCAL GOVERNMENT ?

C. C. FLOREY, Senior Assistant, Kettering P.L.

THE SPECIAL LIBRARIAN hardly knows how lucky he is, compared with his public brother. He serves one master while we serve a multitude—county; metropolitan, municipal and county borough; U.D.C.; and so on, down to the parish pump. We know the vagaries of local government boundaries and accept them philosophically, while cursing the effect they have on the library service. *A* is a progressive and prosperous borough isolated within *B*, a rambling rural county; *C* is an Olde Worlde Boroughe with a Charter dating back to Archibald the Unwashed, but having in this present day much more dignity than money; *D* is now no more than an outer suburb of *E*, a child of the Industrial Revolution, but still hangs on to independence and refuses co-operation with its neighbour.

As usual, the library service is a principal sufferer in this chaos, the Public Library so often being the only council department bringing itself to public notice as an outward and visible return for those astronomic rates. We are often fortunate enough to have our libraries conveniently

distant from the Town Hall, so that we may speak in rude and remote terms of "Town Hall wal'ahs" as though we were nothing to do with that home of officialdom, yet are we so free from the Town Clerk and the Treasurer? It's a delusion! We know all about the infuriating ways of Treasurers who keep our cheques until the last possible moment, but the curse of local government extends far beyond that calamity. The greatest fault is in the parochial-mindedness of councillors and officials, who scorn co-operation with neighbouring authorities. This again is reflected in the library service: outside such special areas as Greater London, where free inter-availability of tickets causes no financial loss to an authority, the library service remains tied to the present ridiculous local government areas. Let us return to the example of town *A* in county *B*. *A* is a busy market town of 40-50,000 people, the natural centre for an area five to ten miles around: natural centre to the inhabitants, that is. To the contriver of boundaries, the inhabitant of a village a quarter of a mile beyond the borough boundary is beyond the pale. *A*, with a large and representative bookstock, is much better equipped to provide a proper service to the people of this area than is even the best-equipped mobile library service from the county town, twenty miles away, or the nearest regional branch, six miles away in another direction (in a "New Town" which the villagers avoid like the plague). *A* could provide such a service—but it doesn't. Boundaries and Finance Committees decree that to avoid an added burden on *A*'s rates, a ten-shilling annual subscription must be charged to these outsiders—not a great charge, but greater than many casual readers are willing to pay, on top of their home rates.

And so the library service loses readers! Mr. and Mrs. Literate are examples. Mr. Literate works in a factory at the above-mentioned New Town, but he and his wife live at *A*, for the sake of its greater amenities. Mrs. Literate is a regular reader at *A*'s Public Library, to which Mr. Literate also belongs, coming in on Saturdays. Eventually, they move to a village a couple of miles away, shortening Mr. Literate's journey to work. But *A* is still their natural centre for shopping and entertainment and all social occasions—including reading: and they find that when they report their change of address at the library, the assistant has regretfully to tell them that they are no longer qualified to use the library freely, but only on payment of a subscription! What is the use of a careful explanation of local government boundaries in that situation? What is the use of telling Mr. and Mrs. Literate that they are not *A*'s responsibility any longer, since they now pay rates to the County and should look for their library service to the County. Small comfort! Their village may have two or three shelves of books in the school, and they have little reason for using the New Town socially—it has few shops and fewer entertainments, even though it has a well-stocked library. That is their new situation: they may solve it by paying a subscription to *A* (with very bad grace) or (more likely) by drifting away from the library, disgruntled and with the feeling of having been cheated.

What is the solution to *our* problem? The stupidities of local government boundaries have irked librarians for years, and everyone from Mr. McColvin down has come forward with suggestions for new library authorities and a wholesale re-drawing of boundaries. But to wait for reports to be implemented and legislation to be got under way is very like waiting for the first space-ship to land on Mars—it may never happen! Action must come from librarians, not legislators: persuasion of committee-members to press for per capita grants, allowing all living near an independent authority to use that authority's library on as easy terms

as local residents; agreement between county and town on inter-availability of tickets; and close co-operation between county and town in satisfying urgent requests for books without resort to the overladen Regional Bureaux.

It's up to us to lead the way in overcoming the obstacles of our archaic local government system—for the sake of our readers and the growth of a truly national library service.

### BETHNAL GREEN WILL NOW SAY A FEW WORDS

By Stanley Snaith.

WHAT extraordinary quirk led to this coltish—I use the word in no pejorative sense—number of the *Assistant Librarian*?\* I cannot guess. I should like to know. No doubt we shall learn in the fulness of time. But whatever it was, I am grateful for it. I think that no-one who has read this number—be he active (an Assistant) or inactive (a Chief)—can have been anything but stimulated.

There was a period in the "giant age before the flood"—I refer to the Thirties—when the organ of the A.A.L. was Bright. Some were perplexed at its being Bright. Some praised it for being Bright. Others damned it for being Bright. But all parties were at one in acknowledging that it was Bright. That lustre, that *élan* has been markedly lacking in recent years. I have deplored—and not been alone in deplored—the extravagant paucity of original ideas and literary talent among the budding librarians of the day. Where, I have asked, is the new Callander? Where, I have asked, is the new Gardner? Where, I have asked, is the new—but here my modest pen shrinks from the patronymic. In short, it seemed that between the Thirties and the present lay unplumb'd, salt, estranging seas.

Those, I am tempted to think, were the Days. The audacities! The veiled (and sometimes scandalously naked) insults! The set-to's! There had been nothing like it before—at least, not in the pitiless publicity of the printed page. Then-a-days, the young were born to trouble—delicious trouble, mind you—as the sparks fly upward.

\*December, 1953.

One young iconoclast, whose name eludes me, fell foul of Mr. Nowell of Manchester. Mr. Nowell expressed a strong distaste for young iconoclasts by invoking the majesty of the law. The sequel is lost in the mists of time, but I have it on good authority that the Y.I. escaped the ball and chain only by the narrowest of margins.

Then there was Berwick Sayers. Some of my young readers may have heard of him. Whenever the Y.I.'s got tired of attacking Clive Bell, James Duff Brown, God, and such small fry, they inevitably turned, like the compass towards its north, to Berwick Sayers. Why, I do not know, unless his ubiquity as a target was an involuntary tribute to his eminence on the part of the Y.I.'s. Anyway, Berwick Sayers proved the most disconcerting, the most disarming, the most disappointing adversary. We smote. He smiled. We smote again. His smile broadened. He said nice things about us. This, we reflected severely, was not playing the game. But to this day at least one Y.I. as he seres and yellows, cherishes the memory of many kindnesses from a great man.

Those, I repeat, were the days. How the sparks flew! Everything we touched was invigoratingly combustible. Thus: a certain library issued an annotated list of recent additions. A *Library Assistant* reviewer singled out one of these annotations for contumely. The librarian rose to the bait and witheringly suggested that the reviewer might oblige by re-casting the annotation as it ought to have been written. This the reviewer did. The librarian treated the re-cast as though it were something the cat had resurrected from the dustbin. The reviewer rushed to the defence of his

ewe lamb. For several months, open war raged around this annotation, until the editor called Time. The whole affair was a mere teacup storm, but while it lasted librarianship was alive and kicking, and the protagonists burnished their flintlocks on going to bed, just in case.

I had thought such times would never return. And now, unexpected, unheralded, like the shower of curates in *Shirley*, abundance is in our midst. I am rebuked. But I am also charmed.

I especially enjoyed the anonymous writer—name ... please!—on library Lifemanship, the more so in that I have already made a tentative incursion into this beguiling and perilous genre. This young man (I assume that he is a young man) is gifted with powers of invention. He sees with his own eyes. He has Found us Out. He has been vouchsafed a shattering

illumination: that librarianship is funny. I warn him that this sort of visitation is injurious to sanity. On balance, I should think our author will presently be off balance. It will come as no surprise when we learn that he has drunk hemlock, tenderly administered by those pillars of orthodoxy, Mr. Harrod and Mr. Cashmore.

But I must not particularise invidiously. The whole issue was a shrewd and witty effort and—dare one hope?—a sign of the times. Notwithstanding the grimly prosaic character of my own professional writings, I am, *au fond*, all for the goat-feet and the antic hay. I can take a joke with the next man. The jokes in this number of the *Assistant Librarian* were well worth taking.

Middle age is a plaguey burden. But a few more issues of this kind and I shall take it in my totter.

## ELECTION OF NATIONAL COUNCILLORS FOR 1954

Elected.	No. of Votes.
1. W. Howard Phillips	1247
2. Miss E. J. Willson	1007
3. A. Ll. Carver	895
4. O. S. Tomlinson	854
5. Miss B. C. Clark	836
6. H. Smith	813
Not Elected.	No. of Votes.
7. J. Green	807
8. A. G. S. Enser	797
9. Miss G. S. Smith	749
10. E. F. Ferry	696
11. E. E. Moon	614
12. K. A. Stockham	612
Voting papers distributed	5352
Total Voting Papers returned	2116
Invalid Voting Papers*	106
Valid Voting Papers counted...	2010

\*Ineligible 80, Too late 20, Unsigned 3,  
Spoiled 3.

(Signed) J. S. PARSONAGE,  
Presiding Officer.

Central Library, Liverpool.

## OTHER NOTICES

**The Induction of the President** will take place at 6.0 p.m. on Thursday, 18th March, in the Liverpool Reference Library.

**The Annual Week-end Conference** will be held at Nottingham on April 10th and 11th.

Final details of these two meetings will be published in our next issue. Meantime, please note the dates. We hope that as many members as possible will take the opportunity of attending.

**A.A.L. Correspondence Courses.** Students are reminded that completed application forms, together with the appropriate fees, for the courses beginning in March and April, must reach Mrs. L. Martin, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E.24, on or before 28th February, 1954, after which date no application will be considered. Earlier receipt is advisable and would be greatly appreciated.

Full particulars of the courses offered are given in the current

*Students' Handbook.*

**Revision Courses.** A limited number of *Registration* and *Final* courses are available to run from March to June. These short period courses are reserved exclusively for those students who have already sat the examination in the subjects required.

Applications will be accepted up to one week after publication of the examination results, when this is later than 28th February.

**Fees.** The fee per course is £2 7s. 6d., plus 10s. extra to students in Africa, America, Asia and Australasia.

## HOW TO BE ERUDITE AND SCALIGERIAN

S. C. HOLLIDAY, Deputy Borough Librarian, Kensington, P.L.

DO YOU KNOW that the Mandarin Chinese word *daan* means not only "gall-bladder," but also "the inside of a thermos flask"? Are you aware that Rupert Brooke's interjection in *Grantchester*—εἴθε γενοιμην—is an echo from the Greek Anthology? Can you dispose of a wadset? Do you know who put the ergot in Mrs. Murphy's chowder?<sup>1</sup> I'll wager you're ignorant of the fact that the elasticity and width of your basilar membrane increases markedly as you progress along your cochlea? Would you care to memorize that the *Liber Mamonis in astronomia a Stephano Philosopho translatus* contains strong criticism of Macrobius, and that Arnald Guillen de Brocar is famed for his printing of the Complutensian Polyglot? Weighty facts like these, casually brought out at appropriate (or even at inappropriate) moments in librarians' meetings, will bring you notoriety as the Nestor of Norton Babant, the Casaubon of Carsphairn, or the Lipsius of Llanerchymedd.

You don't want to be learned? You only want to write about the "fiction problem" in the *Assistant Librarian*? My dear fellow, there are limits to vulgarity! You apologise and desire to enter the novitiate? Rightly so, I think . . . What's that? You want some assurance before you commit your mind to my guidance? Well, what is it? Oh, no, no! Absolutely no statistical work required. One must be honest in these matters. Speaking personally, I can't tackle any equation harder than  $E=c^2(m'-m)$ , and can scarce tell a quantum from a quaternion. No, we will leave figures (except those figures frequently displayed in the shop windows of Charing Cross Road) to those accipitrine abacusses of Chicago.

You have yet another question—a *philosophical* question—to raise? Did I understand you to ask: Why be erudite anyway? Oh, my good chap! My poor, ignorant grume! You must have heard of the ad-writer's dream—a new slant? What we're after is a new slant—an eruditic lurch in librarianship. Is there any call for this leaning to learning? There is, indeed! Don't you sense that a number of men are beginning to detect more than a whiff of paranoia in many aspects of modern librarianship: that they are beginning to question reputations made by well-advertised touches of genius such as painting a newsroom in the lush hue of eau-de-Benfleet Creek, by such masterly papers as describe the quality of manilla pockets for gramophone records or reveal how many books may be packed into a box of a certain size? Don't you wonder if such contemptible claptrap adds up to anything at all, and if its perpetrators deserve the unctuous praise they receive?

Suspicious men fear for themselves, for they are wondering if, at any moment, the deadly question: "Whaddya *really* know, Joe?" may be shot at them (or—worse—at their administrative heads) from higher

authority than the L.A. Education Committee, authority that *will* stay for an answer, and not accept inane, ill-expressed stuttering. What do you say? Should we not exercise compassion, and neglect erudition to comfort and sustain the fearful suspectors? No. Their woes are not serious: they have nothing to lose but their jobs. Let you and me go light and without care. Let us seek for pansophism, and *quaff* the midnight oil. As Goethe might have hiccupped to Eckermann: *Wo das Saufgelag, da die Wissenschaft.*

Where do we start? Anywhere at all, old avian—as long as we remember the golden rule: whatever we study and write, we must publish. No unsung village Gershwin we—us for the big bright lights, for elbowing our way into the cosy covers of *Library Literature* and the *Index Expurgatorius*. The really good topics, such as a study of the Dusky-footed Wood Rat or observations on horseradish peroxidase have already been covered, I'm afraid (see *Nature*, here and there), but I'll suggest five typical subjects—five “research projects”—right away. 1. In the American, or L.Q. style: To what extent do the readers of library books read?

2. In the baloney, or L.A. Final essay style: Chain procedure as applicable to infubilation, with glossary and especially key. 3. In the very bright boy, or let us face the future with a shriek style: Branch libraries for earth satellites—stock, staffing and survival. 4. In the literary-emendatory, or T.L.S. silly season style: Was Hamlet (Act 5, Sc. 2) fat or merely faint? 5. In the McCarthy, or here's mud in your eye manner: Chaucer House and the Red Menace.

You say you know nothing about any of those subjects except possible conspiracy at Chaucer House? Whatever do you mean by that? Oh! those monthly meetings . . . No, it's not ague, I'm just shaking with laughter. I thought everyone knew that nothing whatever occurred at those meetings, though I am told that a gentle lowing was once heard on the first floor. You've been informed that a cache of weapons has been found in the Council Chamber? Slander, old boy, slander! They were only the official back-scratchers—wood and Woolworth's, too, I'm afraid: no ivory for our peacocks.

However, to return. You don't *need* to know anything about those or any other five subjects; even Einstein didn't know anything about Einstein's Theory until he'd made it up. Any subject will do—as long as you're sufficiently obscure about it. And you *must* make sure that the words you use have no connection with the tongue employed by little two-bit creatures like Addison, Jane Austen or George Orwell. If you want to get into the big time, well—take the *Journal of Documentation* for example. You write (a) “It has been pointed out above that the formulation of various categories of substantive is primarily a device for displaying relationships within an ‘analet’”; or (b) “Any sign-post is better than none, and inquiries in the general field of physiological botany . . . will be better served than if the latter were simply imbedded (an irrelevant author-alphabetical position) amongst the general subject material.” That double-bang you heard wasn't the sound barrier—merely two special librarians knocking the English language.

Nothing much to it, is there? I warn you, however, that in addition to all the knowledge you acquire, you must be dull, trivial, portentous; and possess an inch-thick hide, a superlative pair of self-advertising lungs, a strong (if unfounded) sense of superiority—and a damned impertinence.<sup>2</sup> All that'll make you learned; that'll make you a scholar. I doubt if it will make you a librarian or a gentleman.

1. Probably Eratosthenes Dusphatos.

2. As to the last quality, *vide* snide remarks on public librarians in the correspondence columns of “The Engineer,” April, 1953.

## BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

SMITH, LILLIAN H. *The unreluctant years: a critical approach to children's literature.* 1953. (Chicago, A.L.A. (Woolston Book Co., Nottingham) \$4.50.).

Any book on children's literature which bears the imprint of the Toronto Public Libraries is assured of a warm welcome in this country, and this book, beautifully produced by the American Library Association, is a worthy representative of this outstanding system. Miss Smith evaluates children's books as a part of literature and suggests, in effect, that their selection for a Public or personal library should be governed by Paul Hazard's tenet, 'books that remain faithful to the very essence of art.'

To aid selectors in recognising this quality in the few out of the many children's books that are published annually, Miss Smith analyses some classic examples of different types of children's literature, including some quite recent books of distinction such as Rumer Godden's *Doll's House*, Arthur Ransome's *Great Northern?*, and Ludwig Bemelman's *Madeline*, as well as the accepted classics. In her preface, Miss Smith makes it clear that the examples chosen are a matter of personal choice, and thus disarms the critic at the start. For it is on this one point only that I feel there can be any criticism of this excellent and most helpful book. There is always some danger of confusion between the historic landmarks of children's literature and the evergreen classics, and this book is not entirely guiltless of this confusion. *Gulliver's travels*, as Miss Smith, I think, rightly says, owes its early popularity with children to the fact that they 'stumbled on it in an age which produced little else from which children could obtain the imaginative sustenance they craved,' but now that such material is available in abundance, it is doubtful whether Gulliver holds the place he once held in the heart of childhood.

The picture books of Walter Crane, Kate Greenaway and Randolph Caldecott, deep though the debt we owe these artists, are surely historic, rather than living, picture books to the children of to-day. J.W.B.

*Library Trends*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Oct., 1953: current trends in cataloguing and classification; edited by M. F. Tauber. (University of Illinois Library School, \$2).

This issue of *Library Trends*, with the exception of two chapters, is devoted entirely to cataloguing, and is an excellent digest of the recently published literature on many aspects of the subject. Each contribution is followed by detailed references so that the original work or article can be traced. This is a book that should be studied by all who are interested in cataloguing, no matter whether they are students, experienced cataloguers or library administrators.

Some chapters are useful surveys; others are controversial. In the survey group, we have Lubetzky's *Development of Cataloguing Rules*, which is a good historical account of how the various codes came into existence. Evelyn Hensel's *Treatment of Non-Book Materials* deals with the cataloguing of archives and manuscripts, audio-visual materials, maps and picture collections. The cataloguing and recording of holdings of periodical and serial publications has produced a great deal of literature judging from the long list of references at the end of Violet A. Cabeen's and C. D. Cook's *Organization of Serials and Documents*. One of the problems is the devising of a really satisfactory method of recording such publications as they are received, and whether the entry should be under the corporate name or the title. The difficulties encountered in dealing

with government and inter-government publications are discussed, and the value and need for microreproduction of certain documents raises interesting points.

Another aspect of cataloguing that has occupied American librarians for some 80 years, and about which much has been written is cost. This term is used in its relation to the time taken to catalogue each item. No satisfactory method of cutting down time has been found, and it is obvious that if a reduction of research work in the cataloguing department means more research work in the reference service department, nothing has been gained. But cataloguing arrears mean trouble and delay in all departments, and so it is suggested that all works published more than 20 years ago should have a reduced number of subject entries. Foreign works should have no subject entries at all. These methods may help, but they are not an ideal solution.

Co-operative and centralized cataloguing on a national scale are generally recognised as being essential. Lucille Morsch gives a useful account of the schemes that are operated in various countries. She points out that the disadvantages of the Library of Congress scheme are that because of arrears of cataloguing, there are no cards for many titles, and also that Congress does not have all the titles that libraries are adding. In all, a library can only hope to obtain cards for about 60 per cent. of its additions. There has been discussion about the possibility of a centralized cataloguing office where every title added to every library would be catalogued. The office would procure a copy of every title for which cards were ordered, and if it could not procure any particular title, then the library ordering would forward its own copy for treatment. This would be a completely centralized service, where subject and language experts would be employed. In spite of such a service, trained cataloguers would still be needed in the various libraries to maintain the catalogues, and under such a scheme it would be difficult for local cataloguers to obtain the necessary training. Arguments are put forward for co-operative cataloguing. That is to say that certain libraries would be responsible for the cataloguing of certain types of publications or certain subjects. The entries produced would be sent to a central agency for distribution. But it is still felt that no amount of co-operative or centralized cataloguing can finally do away entirely with the cataloguing department in each individual library.

The three contributions that are of the most importance and of the most significance to British librarians are *Developments in Subject Cataloging*, by C. J. Frarey; *Organization and Administration of Cataloging Processes*, by A. H. Trotter; and *Catalog Maintenance*, by A. D. Osborn and Susan M. Haskins. America favours the dictionary catalogue and it seems from the first of these chapters that the subject entries have been occupying cataloguers over a long period. The main problems are how can the subject catalogue be improved, and how can its cost be kept down. For too long it has been a case of following suit and now it is time to examine into the purpose and value of every process. From this chapter two important points emerge:

1. The bibliography, the subject catalogue and the subject index are three distinct tools, each with its own function; they are not interchangeable, nor do they overlap.

2. Libraries must decide whether their subject catalogues are intended to be (a) quick reference finding tools, (b) scholarly and exhaustive bibliographies, or (c) logical and systematic arrangements of the field of knowledge.

It is only too true that frequently the terms bibliography, catalogue

and index are confused. It is also true that some catalogues are made to do the work of the index or bibliography. C. J. Frarey argues that the literature of cataloguing does not distinguish between principles and methods; there is plenty of literature on technique—how to form headings; how to subdivide; when to invert; how to file entries, etc.—but there is no manual to help the cataloguer in making the vital decision as to whether he shall merely record the subject stock under simple headings or whether he shall attempt to reveal all that the library possesses on any aspect or facet of a subject. It seems that rules for forming a catalogue have been made without first of all defining clearly the object of the catalogue.

The larger the library, the more important it is that this definition should be made and adhered to. In a large library it is impossible to reveal all the material on a given subject because the amount of analytical cataloguing required would be prohibitive. Also in a large library there are considerable resources in the shape of catalogues and bibliographies. Can it not be argued then that, in such libraries, the subject catalogue should be simply an inventory of stock, in which case many subject references could be omitted from the dictionary catalogue? Apparently W. W. Bishop raised the question of the need for *see also* references in 1906. Where necessary the inventory type of subject catalogue could be supplemented by subject indexes.

A. H. Trotter's contribution on the organization and administration of cataloguing processes brings out the same problems that are confronting all large library cataloguing departments, namely, arrears of work and rising costs. American librarians have attempted to make surveys of the way in which these departments are run, but the results have shown such diversity that no useful conclusion has been reached. It seems that subject specialization is to be the method of the future. In the past some libraries have divided their incoming material according to its form, but it is now thought that greater economy will be effected by the concentration of certain cataloguers on certain subjects. On the face of it, this appears to be the most logical way of working.

The suggestion of storage libraries is good and might well be considered in this country. Where the storage library serves but one library system, it is really an extension of the stack. It may, however, serve several library systems. The idea is that all little used material should be sent to the storage library, and should be available to all the libraries participating in the scheme. The Midwest Inter-Library Center has fixed location for the stock deposited there; the catalogue is limited almost entirely to author entries, but the member libraries are notified regularly of its resources and additions. Such a scheme weeds out the shelves of a large library, and makes for a much quicker service. There is no reason why a scheme should not be evolved to cover all books published before a certain date with the exception of certain standard works and classics.

A. D. Osborn and Susan M. Haskins make important comments on the maintenance of the catalogue itself. It would be interesting to know whether any large British libraries are constantly editing and improving their existing catalogues. Over a long period of years errors and inconsistencies creep in; with much handling the entries become worn and dirty. The Library of Congress is overhauling its catalogue because: 1, changes in method have resulted in inconsistencies; 2, cards are worn and dirty; 3, there are errors in filing; 4, there are mistakes in call numbers; 5, some subject headings have become obsolete; 6, some subject headings require sub-dividing; 7, many compound headings have made filing difficult; 8, there are insufficient guide cards. It is hoped that this editing will both reduce and simplify the catalogue.

D.M.N.

# LETTER TO A 'PROSPECTIVE STUDENT'

MARION WILDEN-HART, Kensington P.L.

DEAR PRISCILLA,

I hear you intend to become a full-time library student. Before it is too late may I offer you the advice of bitter experience and ask you some pointed questions.

First, what is required of you if you are to be accepted as a full-time library student? Library experience and intelligence, you will say. Your library experience is quite irrelevant to what you will be taught at school and is therefore hardly a consideration. Intelligence is scorned by tutors, who are content to deliver their set lectures just once more at your expense, and who do not welcome any unusual questions. You will therefore only require an understanding, preferably sympathetic, for the full-time tutors, who have to teach students year after year without hope of any getting through, except the unusually dull who are content to think nothing for themselves and rely on quoting the examiner's text book. Some of the tutors, it is true, have a conscience about these things, and diligently seek to revise their notes every year, but most worked too hard in their first year to repeat the mistake.

You must prepare yourself for drudgery also. You will be relieved from the drudgery of stamping books at the counter and the ache in the back of the legs and curvature of the spine

because the counter is too low, but these are minor discomforts compared with what is ahead of you. You will be required to sit until you become numb with sitting and certainly unable to feel what you are sitting on; you will be required to read so much that you will welcome a visit to the printers where you will read the type upside down as naturally as you did the book in the tube in the morning; you will be required to write so long and so fast that you will be pleased to hold in your hand that date stamp that you once despised, in place of your sticky, clammy pen.

But this is not all, Priscilla. Your brain will become a whirl of facets and dragon's blood; Vollans will be intaglio'd on your mind for ever, and only your best friend will keep you from committing arson in every library you enter, or for applying for a building permit under the Act of 1945, sect. 23, sub-sect. 101 (a).

These are not nightmares, Priscilla—they will be reality in the raw. You will become madder than the maddest of your borrowers; but take heart—You will be on your way to becoming a qualified librarian.

You will have heard of certain advantages—holidays for instance. But have you armed yourself for those "practical weeks" allowed by the tutors, who smugly settle down for a

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week's holiday whilst you toil in a library far worse than your own, doing all the jobs left undone since the Library Acts? And what of the homework, Priscilla? Does Walford's *Guide* intimidate you? Then let me remind you that this is *only* a "Guide to the examinations"—a fact the tutors never fail to point out at the end of every lecture. And the visits, Priscilla—with your notebook still in your hand, and the smell of musty bindings going up your nose as the librarian, reminiscing of the old days, proudly shows you around his base-

**ROUND THE DIVISIONS—4**  
**EASTERN**

THE EASTERN DIVISION is numerically one of the smallest, having only a little over one hundred members. Yet geographically it must be one of the largest, extending from Hunstanton and Cromer in the north, to Ipswich and Colchester in the south, and from Yarmouth and Lowestoft in the east, to King's Lynn and the Fens in the west. In the whole area there are only two towns with more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, and these are 45 miles apart.

Librarians in the area must cater for a wide variety of tastes and interests. There are the ancient towns of Colchester and Norwich, both founded in the Roman era, the busy manufacturing town of Ipswich and the great University city of Cambridge; the seaside holiday resorts and herring fishery ports of Yarmouth and Lowestoft; the bird sanctuaries of Blakeney and Scolt Head; the flat farm lands of the Norfolk and Suffolk hinterlands and the wide horizons and rich black earth of the Fens, with its intricate drainage system and curious sounding place names. There is also the holiday playground of the Norfolk Broads, where the most famous East Anglican of them all, Horatio Nelson, first learned to sail.

The Division is proud of the literary and historical associations of its area. In addition to Nelson, local

ment room of bookcases and his home-made index!

And finally, Priscilla, when your best friend has had a nervous breakdown, and you find someone else has got a crush on the same tutor as you, and you know you will fail the exams, and no one tries to dissuade you—even then, Priscilla, your year at college will not have been in vain. For at the end of all, you will be given at least one testimonial in place of the certificate you so sorely needed; it will read (almost certainly): "Work—satisfactory; Conduct—helpful."

## DIVISION

celebrities include Sir Thomas Erpingham, Sir Thomas Browne, the Walpoles, Elizabeth Fry, Amelia Opie, Brooke of Sarawak, Edith Cavell, Harriet Martineau, Rider Haggard, to name only a few chosen at random. Nor are the great names confined to the past. The present Lord Mayor of Norwich is R. H. Mottram, Benjamin Britton was born at Lowestoft, the veteran Socialist writer Fred Henderson is Chairman of the Norwich Public Libraries Committee, and the names of Adrian Bell, Doreen Wallace, Henry Williamson, Neil Bell, Wynward Brown, H. W. Freeman, Michael Home, Alan Walbank, will be well known to all librarians—and there are many others equally eminent who have East Anglian connections.

Enough has perhaps been said to discourage the apparently widespread view that the Eastern Division is little more than a huge Cold Comfort Farm, deeply sunk in "the idiocy of rural life," in Marx's phrase, though the predominantly rural character of the area does create difficulties in the organisation of meetings and other activities. There is no real centre within reasonably easy access of all members, and tedious and expensive rail journeys have to be undertaken by one section or another wherever the meeting is held. However, the normal attendance is about thirty,

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which represents a creditably high percentage of the total membership when other adverse factors such as differing early closing days (or none) and the common difficulties of shortage of staff are taken into consideration. Co-operation with the Eastern Branch of the L.A. is very close and a number of joint meetings are always held each year. Indeed, a special feature of the past few years has been the practice of holding joint week-end conferences—one in the early spring and one in the late autumn. Each conference has a special theme, and alternate A.A.L. and L.A. sessions are arranged with guest speakers invited by the two sections. As far as possible, the location of the conference is varied to give all members a chance to attend at least one each year. To this end the expenses, apart from rail fares, are kept to a minimum of about £1 or 25s. for the week-end, largely by taking advantage of reduced out-of-season terms offered by a number of hotels and boarding houses. The first—very successful—conference was in fact held at a large holiday camp. These conferences have become well-established events, and

have invariably been extremely enjoyable and successful, affording a valuable chance for informal contacts and friendships amongst colleagues who might normally never become more than distantly acquainted at ordinary meetings, where one has almost always to rush off immediately to catch the only reasonable train of the day.

Nor are the interests of the student members neglected. One-day schools covering parts of the Entrance and Registration syllabuses are regularly held at the larger libraries in the Division, although it has, unfortunately, proved impossible, owing to the small number of students at any one time, to organise regular evening courses.

Isolated as it is from the rest of England by geography and British Railways, the Eastern Division relies perhaps more heavily than most on its honorary officers, who must travel long distances and meet comparatively high expenses, often from their own pockets. Acknowledgement must also be made to the co-operation of local staffs, upon whom largely falls the task of arranging the programmes of meetings and conferences.

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